JEPH LOEB
JIM LEE
S. WILLIAMS
IN THE MOUTH OF MADNESS!
610 FEB 2003
BATMAN
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
JIMLEE
WILLIAMS
DIRECT SALES
61011
7 61941 20005 7
$2.25 US $3.75 CAN
dccomics.com

His name is Killer Croc.
GO TO HELL.
He is being held here in Arkham Asylum for "observation."
WHAT DID YOU WANT THE TEN MILLION FOR?
Something has happened to him. He is mutating... losing even more of his humanity.
LET ME OUT AND I'LL SHOW YOU.
WE'RE DONE.
DON'T TURN YOUR BACK ON ME.
Soon, whatever knowledge he has of the crime will be lost within the corridors of his mind.

Someone planned the kidnapping of a little boy for this monster. Croc would never have done it on his own. Too many variables to go wrong.
I'M TALKING TO YOU!
HE'S BECOMING AGITATED.
I WOULD DOUSE HIM, IF I WERE YOU.
LOVE TO.
ARKHAM
2

WHAM
KKKKRRK
THAT MONEY WAS MINE!
The ransom was paid. All ten million dollars.
BATMAN!
There was no doubt in my mind that Croc would have killed the boy even though he had the money. That was more his style.
3

Which is why I got there first.
I rescued the boy. But someone else at the scene snatched the money from Croc...
BATMAN!
McQUAID
CROC! STEP AWAY FROM THE GLASS!

TCHHHHHHSH
HE'S LOOSE!
I'LL KILL ALL OF YOU!
SKRAK
NNGNNN!
I need to know who orchestrated the kidnapping...
NO.
YOU WON'T HURT ANYONE ELSE.
BOOK
...taught my enemy new methods...
SLAM
TOO SLOW.
...and what happened to the money.

I made a promise on the grave of my parents to rid this city of the evil that took their lives. By day, I am Bruce Wayne, billionaire philanthropist. At night, criminals, a cowardly and superstitious lot, call me...
BATMAN
CREATED BY BOB KANE
HUSH
Chapter Three
THE BEAST
Leaving me to send a monster to catch a monster.
GET BACK OR I'LL GUT HIM!
Jeph LOEB writes
Jim LEE pencils
Scott WILLIAMS inks
Richard STARKINGS letters
Alex SINCLAIR colors
Bob SCHRECK edits
Morgan DONTANVILLE assistant edits
special thanks to Mark CHIARELLO

KRASH
I'M GETTING OUTTA HERE. GET MY MONEY BACK.
ALL UNITS! GET SOME HELP DOWN HERE!
GO AHEAD. FOLLOW ME.
I HAVEN'T EATEN SINCE LUNCH.
TRE-CHHH
I DON'T LIKE THIS.
I DON'T LIKE YOU.
No one seriously injured. The guards will get double hazard pay. And Croc has escaped.
So far, so good.

THAT'S ALL RIGHT. I'M NOT HERE TO BE LIKED.
I DON'T NEED TO REMIND YOU THAT THE FATHER OF THE BOY THAT... BEAST...KIDNAPPED IS A PERSONAL FRIEND OF THE PRESIDENT.
Amanda Waller heads up President Luthor's Office of Meta-Human Affairs.
I have history with Waller. None of it pleasant.
That's all right. I'm not here to be liked either.

Dealing with anything remotely connected to Luthor makes my skin crawl. But, Croc was about to be transferred out of my city...
YOU MEAN HE'S A MAJOR CONTRIBUTOR TO LUTHOR'S CAMPAIGN PARTY.
YOU'VE GOT UNTIL MIDNIGHT.
THEN, CROC IS OURS.

KRAKA
THOOM
MASTER BRUCE...?
GO AHEAD, ALFRED.
A CAR JUST PULLED UP TO THE HOUSE. ARE WE EXPECTING COMPANY?
NO.
PHILADELPHIA LICENSE PLATE, HMX 19...I CAN'T MAKE OUT THE LAST NUMBER IN THIS STORM.
I have until midnight...

Wayne Manor. What was once my father's house is now mine.
Along with all the memories that it holds.
ORACLE?
I'M HERE. EVEN OFF A PARTIAL PLATE, PHILADELPHIA D.M.V. SHOWS THE OWNER TO BE DR. THOMAS ELLIOT.
THAT'S... UNEXPECTED.

YOU SURE I CAN'T ENTICE YOU TO COME HOME, SIR? AFTER ALL, DR. ELLIOT ONLY SAVED YOUR LIFE.
I WOULD IF I COULD, ALFRED.
I BELIEVE THAT'S "I COULD IF I WOULD," IN YOUR CASE, SIR.
BING BONG
JUST MAKE THE USUAL EXCUSE, PLEASE.
CONSIDER IT DONE, SIR.
GOOD EVEN-- TOMMY...?
HELLO, ALF.
I...I APOLOGIZE, SIR, FOR THE INFORMALITY. YOU ARE "DOCTOR THOMAS ELLIOT" THESE DAYS, AREN'T YOU?

NO NEED TO APOLOGIZE, ALF.
I'M DELIGHTED THAT DESPITE A FEW YEARS AND A FEW *POUNDS* YOU STILL RECOGNIZE ME.
WELL, SIR, I HAVE THE ADVANTAGE OF SEEING MASTER BRUCE PUT ON THOSE SAME *"FEW YEARS AND FEW POUNDS"* AS YOU PUT IT.
I...UM... *HAD* FORGOTTEN YOUR...DELIGHTFUL PENCHANT FOR CALLING ME *"ALF,"* ODDLY ENOUGH.
GLAD TO SEE YOU'VE KEPT THAT DRY SENSE OF HUMOR.
SPEAKING OF *"DRY"*... AREN'T YOU GOING TO INVITE ME IN? I'D LIKE TO CHECK UP ON MY *PATIENT.*
OF COURSE; ONLY...
...MASTER BRUCE *ISN'T* AT HOME RIGHT NOW.
NOTHING SERIOUS, I HOPE.
QUITE THE OPPOSITE, I'M AFRAID.
"GOING OFF IN SEARCH OF A LADY!" I BELIEVE HE SAID.
OH.
ALF.
AS HIS *SURGEON AND* AN OLD FRIEND --
-- TELL HIM SOMETHING FOR ME?
THIS IS A *DANGEROUS* GAME HE IS PLAYING.
SIR...?
THIS GOING OUT AND ABOUT WHEN HE SHOULD BE *IN BED. ALONE.*
DANGEROUS.

I WILL TELL HIM...
...TOMMY...
Tommy Elliot. On a night just like this...
MASTER ELLIOT, WHAT BRINGS YOU OUT HERE AT THIS HOUR...?

ALF...
...CAN I TALK TO BRUCE?

WHAT'RE YOU DOING OUT THERE IN THE RAIN, YOU KNUCKLEHEAD?!

THERE'S... THERE'S BEEN AN ACCIDENT.
MY... MOM AND DAD... THEIR CAR...

Gotham City Hospital. My father was Head of Trauma Surgery back then.
Hospitals are awful places at night.
Especially for children...
MY DAD IS IN THERE, TOMMY. NOTHING BAD IS GOING TO HAPPEN.
I TRIED TO WARN MISTER ELLIOT.
NIGHT LIKE THIS, THE ROADS GET SLIPPERY.
I SHOULD HAVE BEEN DRIVING THEM -- BUT HE INSISTED ON GOING OUT ALONE WITH THE MISSUS.
YOU MUSTN'T BLAME YOURSELF, CLARENCE. ACCIDENTS WILL HAPPEN.
AND GIVEN THE SITUATION, THEY COULD NOT BE IN BETTER HANDS.
YOU SWEAR...?
STICK A NEEDLE IN MY EYE.
THANKS, BRUCE...

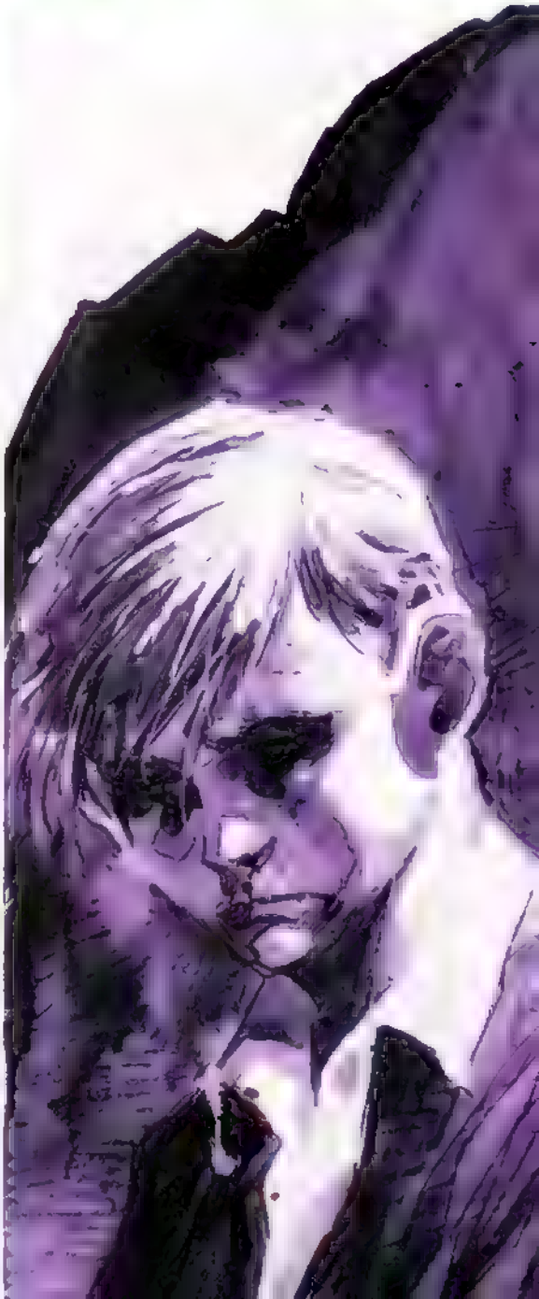
TOMMY.
COME HERE, SON.

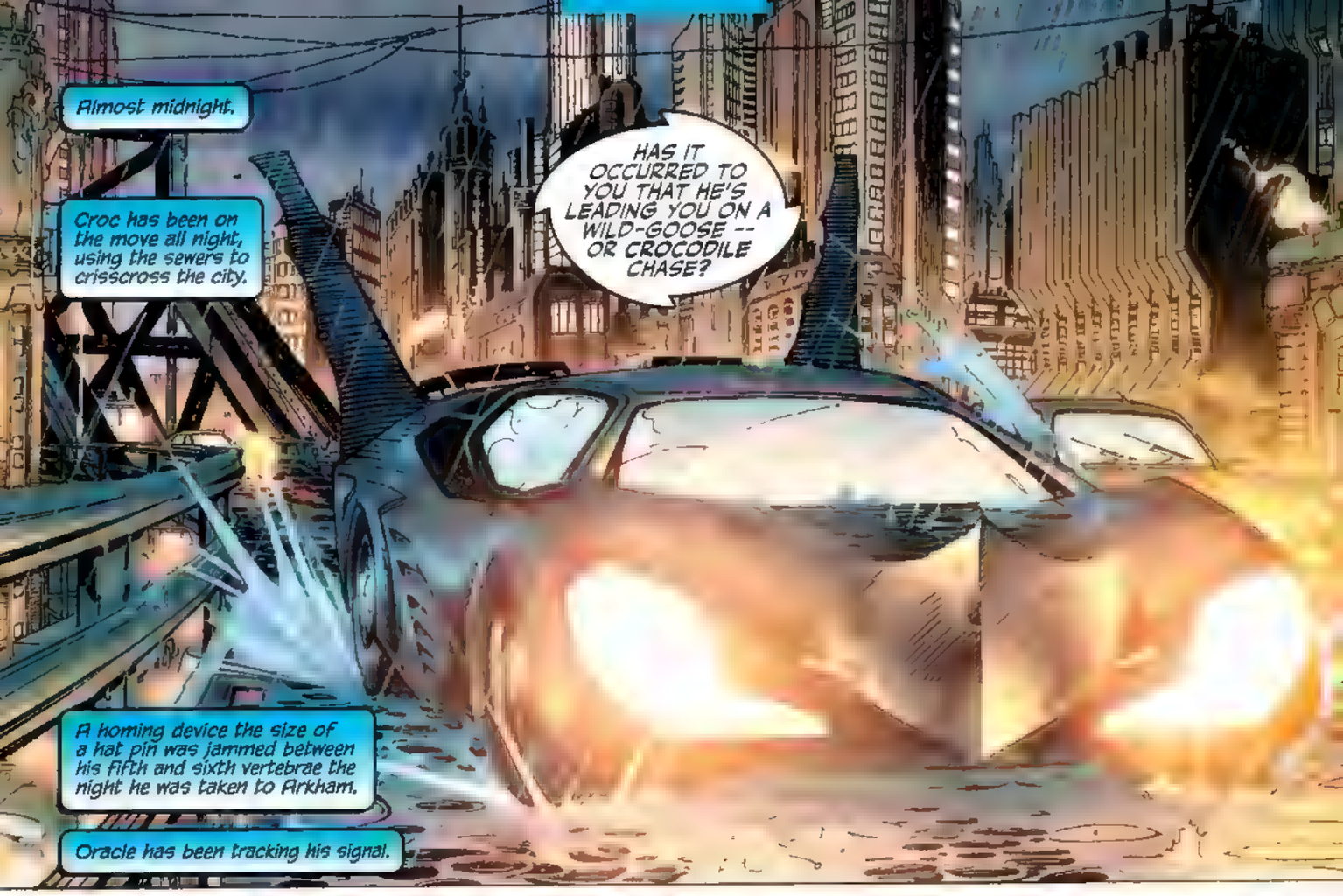
YOUR MOM IS GOING TO BE JUST FINE.
SEE? I TOLDYA.
AND MY DAD...?
I...I'M SORRY. I DID EVERYTHING IN MY POWER --

NO! HE'S NOT GONE! I'M GOING IN THERE TO SEE HIM!
TOMMY, MY DAD SAID HE DID EVERYTHING --

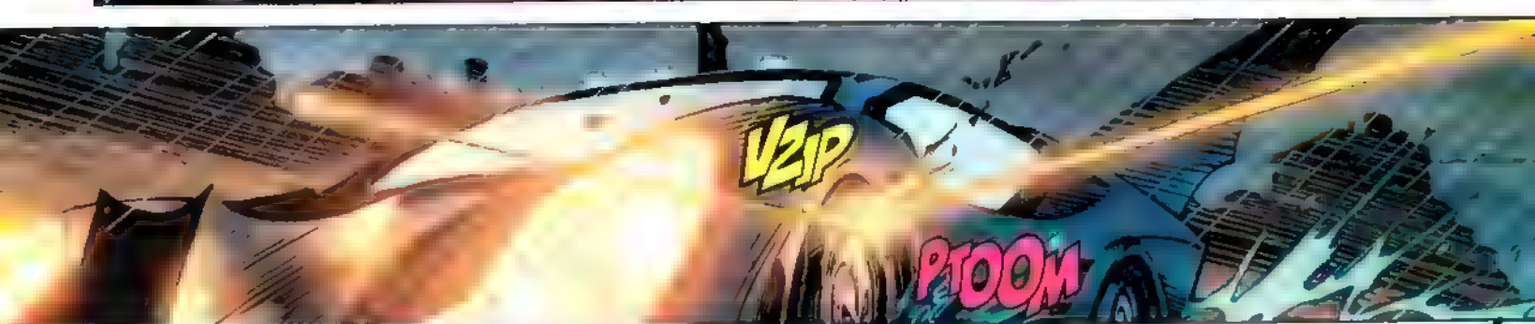
LIAR! YOU PROMISED! YOU SWORE!
WAP
OW!

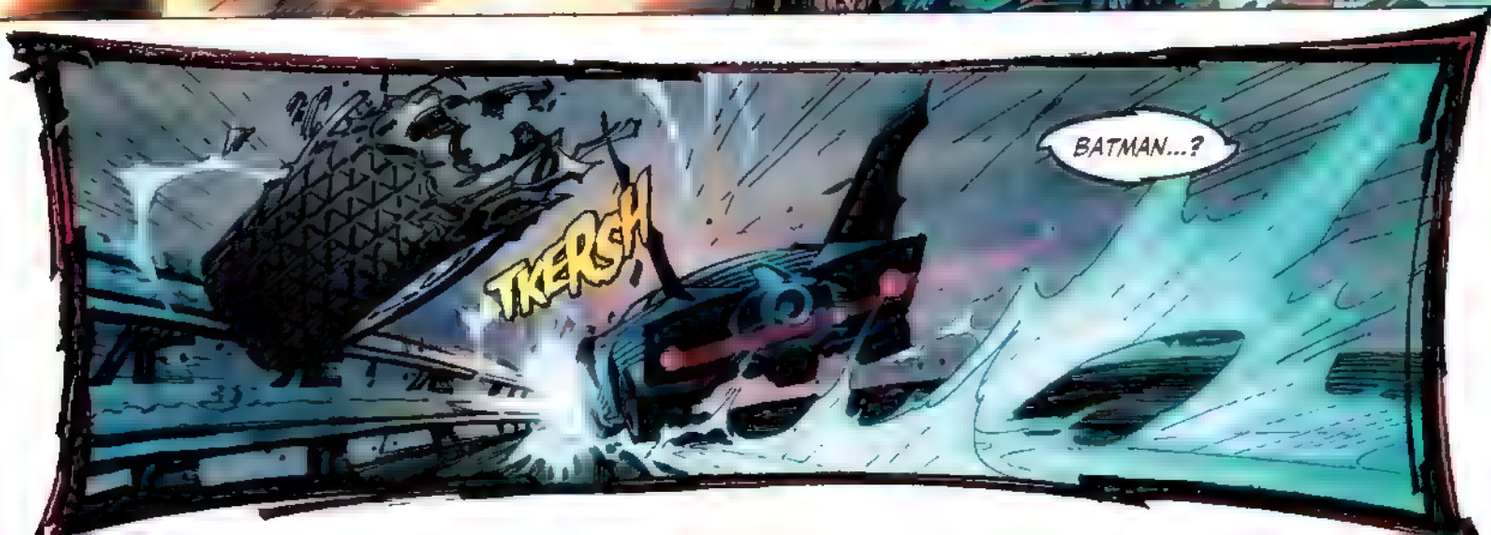
WHAT'DJA DO THAT FOR?
BRUCE.
BE QUIET.
WHY'D YOU HAVE TO TELL ME IT WAS GOING TO BE OKAY, BRUCE? WHY?

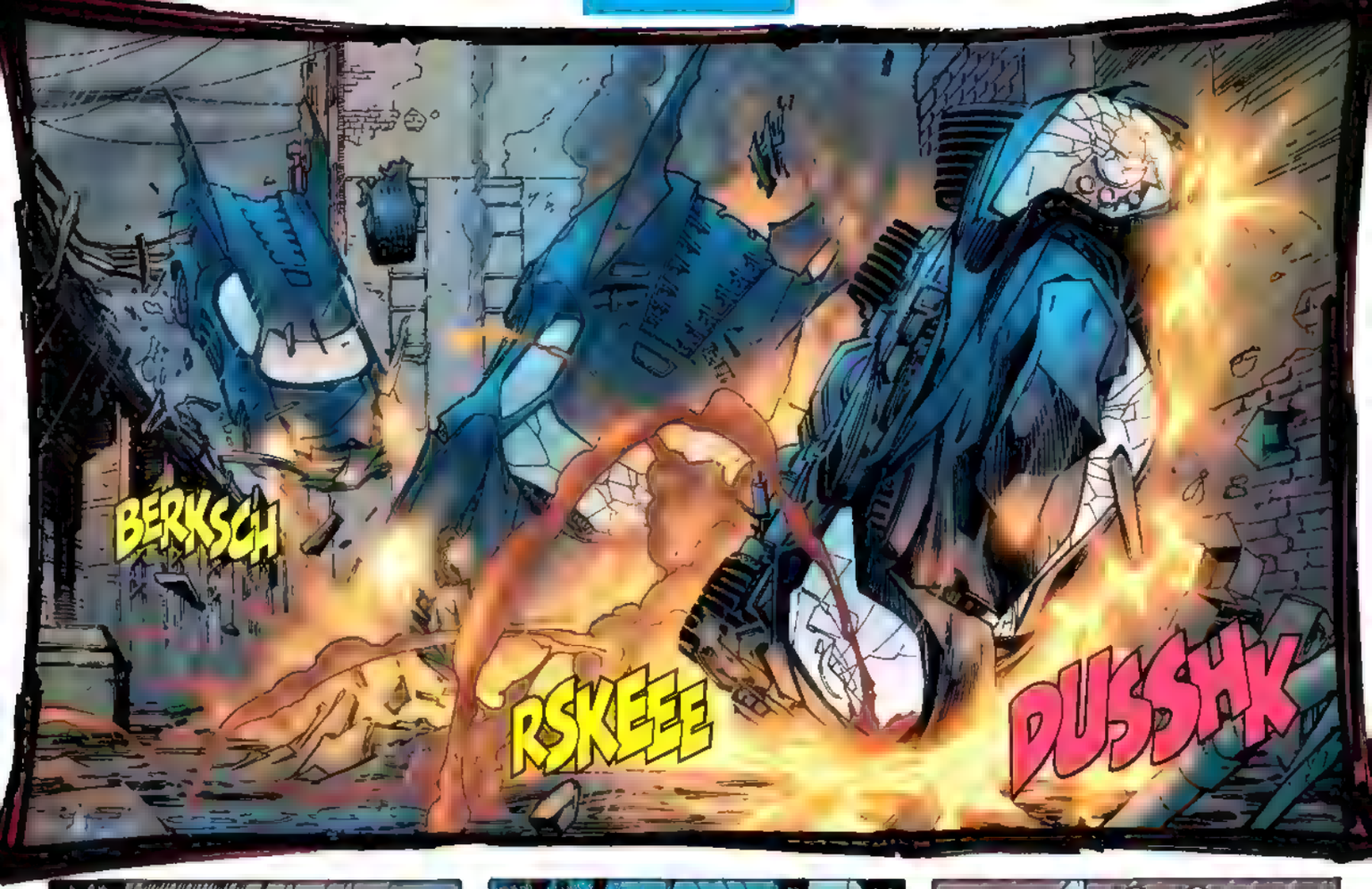


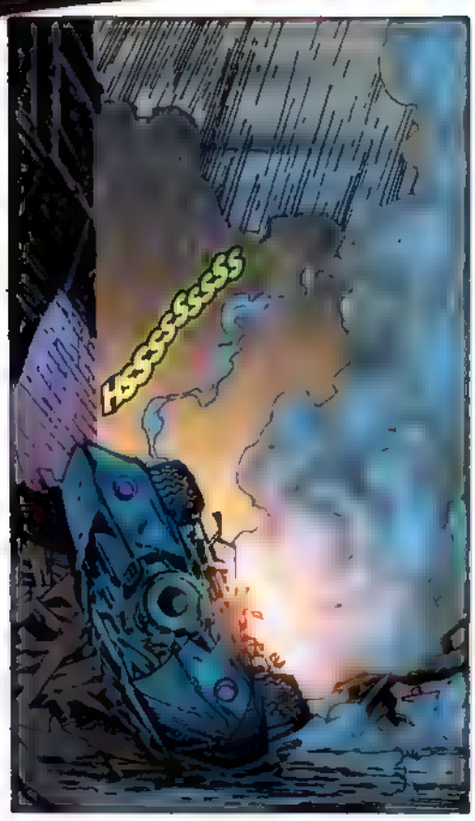

Almost midnight.
Croc has been on the move all night, using the sewers to crisscross the city.
HAS IT OCCURRED TO YOU THAT HE'S LEADING YOU ON A WILD-GOOSE -- OR CROCODILE CHASE?
A homing device the size of a hat pin was jammed between his fifth and sixth vertebrae the night he was taken to Arkham.
Oracle has been tracking his signal.

HE WANTS THAT *MONEY*, ORACLE.
HE WILL EITHER LEAD US TO IT --
-- OR TO THE PERSON WHO ARRANGED THIS ENTIRE --


VZIP
PTOOM


TKERSH
BATMAN...?


BERKSCH
RSKEEE
DUSSHK


HSSSSSSSSS

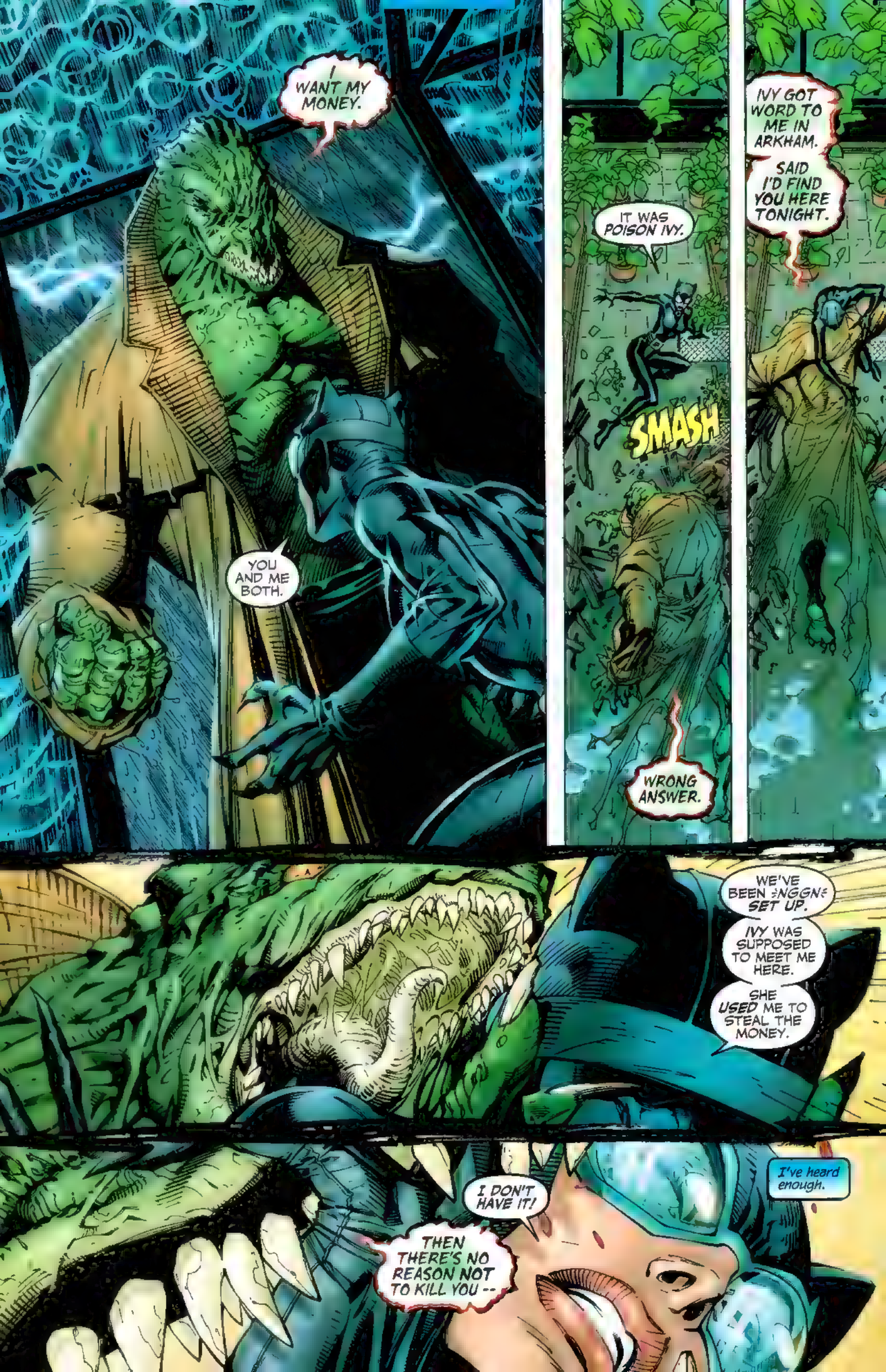
BATMAN!
I'M NOT GETTING -- CAN YOU HEAR ME?

THRROOCH
ANSWER ME, DAMMIT!

ORACLE.
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON OUT THERE?

ORACLE. WHATEVER YOU DO -- DO NOT LOSE THE HOMING SIGNAL ON CROC.
YOU DIDN'T ANSWER MY QUESTIONS --
JUST DON'T LOSE THAT SIGNAL!
...

The Batmobile's outfitted with Kevlar-reinforced tires filled with petroleum jelly.
It is the sort of tire they use in a Presidential arcade or an armored car.
A blowout is next to impossible.
Someone went to a lot of trouble to get me to lose track of Croc.
HELLO, KITTY.
They are going to be disappointed.


I WANT MY MONEY.
YOU AND ME BOTH.
IVY GOT WORD TO ME IN ARKHAM.
SAID I'D FIND YOU HERE TONIGHT.
IT WAS POISON IVY.
SMASH
WRONG ANSWER.
WE'VE BEEN ƎNGGNƧ SET UP.
IVY WAS SUPPOSED TO MEET ME HERE.
SHE USED ME TO STEAL THE MONEY.
I DON'T HAVE IT!
THEN THERE'S NO REASON NOT TO KILL YOU --
I've heard enough.

FTOOSH
NO!
ZIP
ZIP
ZIP
I TOLD YOU EARLIER THIS EVENING...
...YOU WON'T HURT ANYONE ELSE.
TCK
CLNK
FTOOSH
CATWOMAN --
-- MOVE!
It was Catwoman who took the money from Croc at the ransom drop.

I was... disappointed to find out Selina was stealing again...
TKERSH
SPLUNK
...and am now oddly relieved to learn she was not entirely responsible for her actions.
WRHAM
To know she is not part of this...
GUHNNN
IT'S AFTER MIDNIGHT.
YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND.
THE ONLY WAY OUT OF THIS IS TO TALK TO ME.
SOMEONE IS PLAYING US -- YOU, ME, CATWOMAN --
-- MAYBE EVEN IVY.
YOU HAVE TO TRUST ME, CROC.
LOOK AT ME...!
...LOOK AT WHAT I'VE BECOME...
...THAT MONEY WAS TO FIX...

WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP
KILLER CROC! THIS IS THE F.B.I.!
STAY WHERE YOU ARE AND PUT YOUR HANDS IN THE AIR!
IDIOTS...
LIAR! I KNEW I COULDN'T TRUST YOU!
I'LL KILL YOU FOR THIS!
CROC! WE CAN STILL --
DAMMIT.
BAM
BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA
I'LL KILL ALL OF YOU!

LIGHTHOUSE, THIS IS CRUISE SHIP ONE.
PACKAGE IS BEING WRAPPED.
DARKE
ZZZRACK
READY FOR DELIVERY.
WALLER...
"ALL MEN BY NATURE DESIRE KNOWLEDGE"
ROBINS

I spend the next six nights looking for any clues to further my investigation.
Wherever they've stashed Croc, I can't find him...
...For now.
I keep thinking about the look in his eye just before they took him. How the monster had overcome him...
BATMAN...?

I'VE FOUND POISON IVY.
MY... SOURCES TELL ME SHE'S RELOCATED.
SHE'S IN METROPOLIS. I WANT IN ON THIS.

LISTEN...I... YOU SAVED MY LIFE.
THROUGH THE YEARS, YOU'VE DONE THAT MORE THAN ONCE.
I DON'T THINK I'VE EVER PROPERLY THANKED YOU.

DON'T.
WE'VE DONE THIS DANCE FOR A LONG TIME. TOO LONG.

AREN'T YOU AT ALL CURIOUS?

Criminals, by nature, are a cowardly and superstitious lot.
To instill fear into their hearts I became a bat. A monster in the night.
And in doing so, have I become the very thing that all monsters become...
...Alone...?
next: Metropolis

DC IN DEMAND

12.02

dccomics.com
keyword: DC COMICS on AOL

This Month's Cover by...
JIM LEE, SCOTT WILLIAMS
COLOR BY ALEX SINCLAIR

Next Month in...

Batman #611

A Dark Knight in Metropolis!! Brought to you by the hottest team in comics today: Jeph Loeb, Jim Lee and Scott Williams!

JSA #45-51 (Feb. '03 to Aug. '03) In a story arc that promises to weave together every plot thread of the past four years, three super-villains make a diabolical pact to take out the "Original Heroes" once and for all. JSA's "old guard"—Wildcat, Hawkman, Jay Garrick, and Sentinel—take center stage, but look for new heroes to be born as well. A great chance for new readers to join in!

Hot List THIS MONTH

GOTHAM CENTRAL #1

The GCPD's detectives star in their own ongoing series—and the race is on to stop a major Batman villain before the Dark Knight intervenes. Written by Greg Rucka and Ed Brubaker; art and cover by Michael Lark.

AQUAMAN #1

It's Aquaman as you've never seen him before! Exiled from the life-giving ocean he once called home, the former King of the Sea must find a new sanctuary. Written by Rick Veitch; art by Yvel Guichet and Mark Propst.

BATGIRL: YEAR ONE #1

The creators of ROBIN: YEAR ONE return with a look at the early years of one of DC's most popular characters – Barbara Gordon, the original Batgirl! Written by Chuck Dixon and Scott Beatty; art by Marcos Martin and Alvaro Lopez.

BATMAN #610

Jeph Loeb & Jim Lee continue their run on BATMAN with Part 3 of the 12-part "Hush." Even Arkham can't hold Killer Croc, or at least that's what Batman and Amanda Waller want him to believe.

Let's clear up all *outside* rumors regarding **THE TITANS** and **YOUNG JUSTICE** "cancellations." True, school's *out* for these two teams in May, but fear not–writer Judd Winick will matriculate our heroes in style with the crossover "Graduation Day," setting the stage for next *in* books.

OUTSIDERS starts in June, with Winick laying down the verbiage for the *marvel*-ous art team of **Tom** "Thor" **Raney** and **Scott** "Spider-Man" **Hanna.** Out from under the shadow of the Bat, **Nightwing, Arsenal, Jade,** and some new members–including one that will *shock* you–do the covert dirty work no one else will touch…don't expect these OUTSIDERS to fit *in* with the rest of the DCU!

Like fireworks? **Geoff Johns** and **Mike McKone** light the fuse on pyrotechnic superhero action this July with new **TEEN TITANS!** In this ongoing, old-school members **Cyborg, Raven, Starfire,** and **Beast Boy** mix it up with newbies **Superboy, Robin,** and…***Kid Flash?!!***

It's hard to imagine a better writer/artist on **PLASTIC MAN** than **Kyle Baker,** so don't bother. His PM special will come bouncing your way in late '03!

To get more of DC in Demand's Inside Scoop, go to www.dccomics.com/dcindemand right now!

And you've probably heard that **Simonson, Ordway,** and **Russell** are starting a six-month run on **WONDER WOMAN** in February…but did you know the writer taking over after them is hard-boiled **Greg Rucka**? Greg pitted Diana against **Batman** and the Furies in last summer's hardcover smash **THE HIKETEIA.** This time, when I heard that he's come up with a new supporting cast and "a brand-new, *non-superpowered* villain to challenge Wonder Woman in *very* unexpected ways," I just *had* to blab! Expect the unexpected in late summer of next year…

– your MOLE at 1700

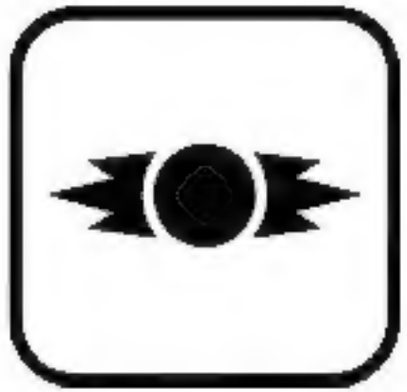
DC COMICS JENETTE KAHN President & Editor-in-Chief PAUL LEVITZ Executive VP & Publisher MIKE CARLIN VP-Executive Editor GEORG BREWER VP-Design & Retail Product Development RICHARD BRUNING VP-Creative Director PATRICK CALDON Senior VP-Finance & Operations TERRI CUNNINGHAM VP-Managing Editor DAN DIDIO VP-Editorial JOEL EHRLICH Senior VP-Advertising & Promotions ALISON GILL VP-Manufacturing LILLIAN LASERSON VP & General Counsel DAVID McKILLIPS VP-Advertising JOHN NEE VP-Business Development CHERYL RUBIN VP-Licensing & Merchandising BOB WAYNE VP-Sales & Marketing

BATMAN 610. February, 2003. Published monthly by DC Comics, 1700 Broadway, New York, NY 10019. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to BATMAN, DC Comics Subscriptions, P.O. Box 0528, Baldwin, NY 11510. Annual subscription rate $27.00. Canadian subscribers must add $12.00 for postage and GST. GST # is R125921072. All foreign countries must add $12.00 for postage. U.S. funds only.

Copyright © 2003 DC Comics. All Rights Reserved. All characters featured in this issue, the distinctive likenesses thereof, and all related indicia are trademarks of DC Comics. The stories, characters and incidents mentioned in this magazine are entirely fictional. Printed on recyclable paper. DC Comics does not read or accept unsolicited submissions of ideas, stories or artwork.

Printed in Canada.

DC Comics. A division of Warner Bros.—An AOL Time Warner Company



MINUTEMEN
SCANS